Nova Con 11

Progress Report 3

GoH John Meaney

11th – 13th November 2011
(yes, that's 11-11-11)

Park Inn, Nottingham
11th – 13th November 2011

Guest of Honour: **John Meaney**

Membership Rates

Adults: £40 13-16 years: £10 12 and under: free
Rates are subject to review. Day rates will be available at the convention.

Hotel Rooms

Double or Twin: £42 pppn Single: £ 59 pppn
Children: under 5 years free, 5-14 years £5 pppn (ages at the date of the convention)

Contact Details

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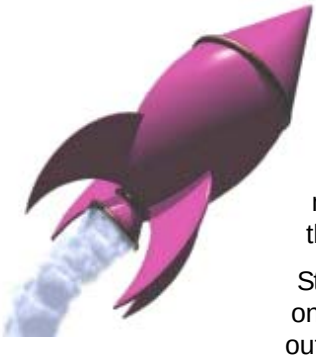

Welcome to the 3rd and final progress report for Novacon 41. Lots of important stuff in this issue for you to read, even if it's only the Travel Information so that you know how to get there. Of course you do want to know what we've got planned to entertain you for the weekend so make sure you read the chairman's piece and the latest on the the programme.

Steve Green's 'Going Nova' has important news on the Nova Awards and, to encourage you to get out there and read a few, Yvonne Rowse tells us why she loves fanzines. Of course, there's details of the art show and an update on the hotel. So just go read it all!!

John & Eve Harvey

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to our contributors: Steve Lawson, Richard Standage, Tony Berry, Serena Culfeather, Steve Green and Yvonne Rowse. Special thanks to Yvonne Meaney for the cover photograph of John Meaney. Thanks also to Steve Green and Kevin Clarke for running the Novacon website:

www.novacon.org.uk

Since 1972, Novacon has been organised by the Birmingham SF Group, which celebrated its fortieth birthday in June. Meetings of the BSFG are held on the second Friday of each month at the Briar Rose Hotel, Bennetts Hill. For more information on future meetings look on their website:

www.birminghamsfgroup.org.uk

BSFG Membership costs £16 per year which includes a monthly newsletter. For further information, a copy of their newsletter or a membership application form contact their Membership Secretary Vicky Cook on:

bhamsfgroup@yayoo.co.uk

From the Chair

Steve Lawson

Well here we are again, after spending most of the year organising the convention and thinking we had plenty of time to get everything done, which of course we had, we get down to the frantic last few weeks when, to be honest, most of the real work gets done.

Thankfully I have a really good team surrounding me, Alice to make sure we don't spend all of the money, John and Eve, making sure that you are reading this, Richard and Helena, making sure that you all have something interesting to do at the convention, assuming that you can tear yourselves away from the bar. Tony is looking after the hotel and the dealers room as well as being the centre of all our universes, at least his house is, where we have had the majority of our committee meetings. And there's Cat, who has the ultimate power of being able to re-write the past and control the future, should she wish.

I am also very happy with John Meaney as our Guest of Honour. We have known John and his wife Yvonne for many years at a number of conventions and I am looking forward to enjoying another Novacon in their company. On Friday night we will be having a party for John, where you can buy advance copies of his latest book, **Transmission**, the second book in the Ragnarok Trilogy which is not due out in the shops till February 2012.

If you've never been to a Novacon before, here's what to expect: A Dealers' Room where you can spend your money, a Book Auction where you can spend your money, an Art Show and Auction where you can spend your money, and a bar where you can *really* spend your money.

Saturday will see John doing his guest of honour talk, there will also be many other items of interest, please check out Richard's piece about the program later in this publication.

Sunday evening sees the usual wind-down party of International Beer Tasting and Hot Food. To get the beer free, you need to contribute at least THREE bottles of British or foreign beer (the more unusual the better) which you check in to Registration when you arrive and receive a Beer Badge in return. Or you can buy a badge for £5.00. Only people with beer badges can drink the beer but soft drinks will be available free to all.

The food theme, decided by our guest, will be Mexican, again you MUST buy a ticket from Registration if you wish to partake of the food. This is a special event by agreement with the hotel, and does not mean that you can bring your own food or drink into the convention.

If you want to help out at the con, we need GOPHERS to ensure the smooth running of things (when the entire committee is busy or has managed to escape). In return for your efforts you'll receive Groats (gopher reward tokens) which can be spent over the bar.

John Meaney

You've may not have met the man yet, but you can meet the work

Eve Harvey

It's not long now until your chance to meet John at Novacon – just 28 days (as of the date of writing), so if you haven't read any of his books yet, you'd better get started now.

To help you, here's some of his work. . .

You may want to start with the last first. **Absorption**, the first volume of his millennia-spanning space opera trilogy (Ragnarok trilogy) appeared this summer.

Alternatively, if you like sharp things, then look at his Josh Cumberland works written as Thomas Blackthorne

Edge A near-future thriller depicting a Britain with a corrupt government where civic services are breaking down and entertainment is somewhat lethal.

Point Teenagers slitting each other's wrists is not new, but can our hero combat a wave of psychological terror that threatens a nation's youth and perhaps the world?

Books actually under his own name include:

Tristopolis books

Bone Song Bones have an unusual part to play in the life of the citizens of Tristopolis – you just wouldn't believe it.

Dark Blood Our hero continues to be crucial to Tristopolis – but is he the man he once was?

Nulapeiron Sequence

Paradox Want to find out what 'logosophically trained' means, then you must read this book!

Context Now you meet a logosopher. . .

Resolution Tom doesn't just have a wife – he has a close friend, the bloody disembodied head of a Seer. Now aren't you just dying to meet this hero?

And then there is always:

To Hold Infinity In which we meet Luculentus Rafael Garcia de la Vega; a psychopath, able to suck thoughts and memories from people's minds.

I'm beginning to get a little concerned about this GoH of ours, what with bones that are more than bones, dismembered heads and sucking thoughts out of your minds. . . let alone main characters with such complex names!

I wonder what will be in **Transmission** – you'll have to wait until the convention to find out.

The Novacon Programme

Richard Standage

So here we are, mere weeks away from the convention, and programme planning has shifted up a few gears to try and tie all the ideas together into a something that will keep you engaged and entertained over the weekend. Hopefully we've put together a programme that will bring out the best in all the talented and entertaining people who have very kindly agreed (or maybe just persuaded) to be involved.

So what can you expect? Please bear in mind, as I am sure you will appreciate if you have done this before, that even at this stage all this is very much subject to change…

Friday will kick off as always with the Opening Ceremony. Here you can meet the committee and be introduced to our Guest of Honour John Meaney. There will be a chance to find out what's in store for you over the weekend and how to volunteer your much needed and appreciated services helping out. We'll be following this with the ever popular Steve Green getting down to some light hearted banter with John and a couple of other specially chosen guests. And that will bring us nicely to our Friday night party. An excellent opportunity to come along and catch up with all the people you may not have seen since this time last year. There will be books to buy and get signed, with free wine and nibbles, and when we've eaten and drunk all that we'll get down to some seriously competitive charades.

For the early risers and those who are lucky enough not to be too hungover, we'll start Saturday with our first Science talk of the weekend. Dr Frazer Pearce from the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Nottingham is going to do a very cheerful talk entitled 'Megadeath', looking at potential catastrophes that could kill a million plus people, such as asteroid strikes, plague etc., discussing the scientific background behind them.

Other plans for Saturday (in no particular order at this stage) include the regular book auction and Guest of Honour talk, Chris Morgan discussing the history of the British paperback, Eve Harvey and some of our more venerable fans discussing how and why they came into fandom, and our Guest of Honour leading an item with the inspiring title of I Can Make You Write. Saturday evening we want you to be both involved and entertained, and so we are having our own version of 15 to 1, followed by a full blown production from the legendary Ian Sorensen.

By Sunday morning we'll be really testing you hangover remedies to their limit with our second science talk of the weekend. Dr Meghan Gray, also from the University of Nottingham, will do a talk on The Dark Side of the Universe. Sunday also promises a talk on fannish art from Dave Hicks and a

panel on the role of women in SF.

You can of course add to this the art auction and awards ceremony, as well as the end of convention wind down in the form of the beer and food tasting, this year featuring Mexican food.

So that‘s were we are at so far. As I am sure you know more details will be in your Programme Book on the day, and the most up to date version as is humanly possible in the Read Me. See you there.

Nova awards:

A tradition of Novacon for more than 30 years, the Nova Awards will be presented for outstanding achievement by fan editor, writer and artist, as voted for by the membership of the convention. See Steve Green’s piece in this PR for the latest news and details of eligible fanzines.

Parents’ co-op:

Novacon will not be operating a crèche but we will look into setting up a parents’ co-op, where a room is set aside for smaller children to play under parental supervision if there is sufficient demand. If you’re interested let us know as soon as possible.

Food and drink:

As last year we expect to provide real ale and a good cider plus a range of affordable snacks and meals throughout the weekend. See the hotel update for the latest details.

Gophers:

We need volunteers to help us keep the convention running during the weekend. If you want to help out please contact us.

Website:

Don’t forget to keep an eye on our website for the latest news:

www.novacon.org.uk

The London in 2014 Worldcon bid plans to run a tea and scones soiree at some point over the weekend and would like people to join them.

Ooooh, nice, and there’s no calories in them at all.

Hotel Update

Tony Berry

The hotel has a new general manager and head chef this year, but most of the regular team are still there, so I'm confident everything will be fine.

Last year a large number of people decided to eat in the hotel restaurant on Friday evening, which led to problems and delays getting served. The new manager suggests that this year, on Friday evening only, they run a carvery in the restaurant for those who want a sit-down meal. A couple of joints of meat, a fish dish and a vegetarian option at a fixed price will simplify things and speed them up. This sounds good to me; I like the new manager already. The convention food ordered from the bar will still be available, of course.

Speaking of food, our Guest of Honour has chosen Mexican to accompany the Sunday evening beer tasting. Yeeha! There may be chilli. It may have beans in it. Shut up Sheldon.

Due to lack of interest we will not be offering a room for parents and children this year, but we do have a spare room, so if there is suddenly a demand I'm sure something could be sorted.

Finally, we intend to open the downstairs bar again this year. I was a little optimistic last year and it was very underused during the day, so this year it will be open and selling booze from 7pm – midnight Friday and Saturday only. It will be open as a lounge area at other times.

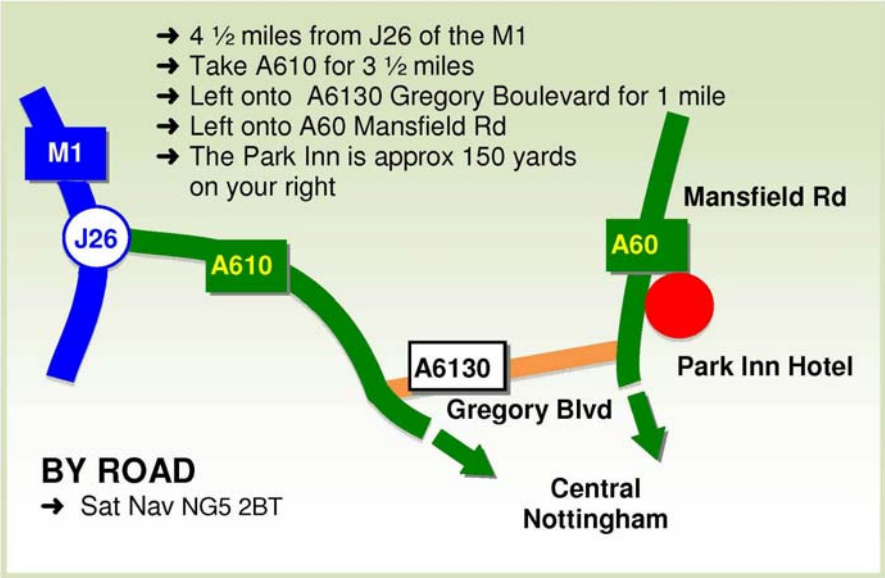
How to Get There

By Car

Whether you are coming from the north or the south, the best route is to use junction 26 from the M1. Then follow the map on the opposite page.

By Public Transport

Train: You will arrive at Nottingham Railway Station and either catch a taxi to the hotel (under £10) or walk (approx. 15 mins) to the bus stops on Lower Parliament Street and follow the instructions below for bus.



Coach: You will most probably arrive at Broadmarsh Bus Station, which is next to the railway station so follow the instructions above for train.

Bus: For full info, see Nottingham City Transport's website www.nctx.co.uk

Best routes are from Lower Parliament Street where there are a number of stops for the 6 buses which go to Mansfield Road:

- Purple routes – 87, 88 and 89
- Lime green routes – 56, 58, 59

After about 2 miles, look out on the left and you'll see a cemetery while going down a hill: the bus will cross a large roundabout with flowerbeds. This is the junction with Gregory Boulevard. The stop immediately after is Clarendon College and you should get off here. There's a Pelican crossing 20 yards up, cross here and the Park Inn is 80 yards up the road on the left. If you go past a pub called the Grosvenor, you've gone too far and need to get off bus sharpish and walk back.

Tram: Unfortunately these do not run to the hotel, but you can catch them from near the bus station/railway station to Lower Parliament Street and then catch a bus

Art Appeal

Serena Culfeather

We had a fabulous show of art last year for “our” 40th but there is no excuse for slowing down just because we’re 41 this time!

The downstairs is less of a dark dungeon now that Novacon has access to all areas and, more importantly, to all bars so a visit to the Art Show should be on your itinerary.

The show of art is free to enter, free to look at and free to leave and although most items will be up for auction on Sunday, you don’t need to be a potential buyer in order to look at and enjoy what our artists have to offer.

There are some artists who regularly exhibit and I always look forward to their displays, so awe-inspiring for would-be artists like myself. Last year I asked for Young Science Fiction Art from under sixteens and would love to see some more this year. This art work is not offered for sale but on display to encourage budding artists among our quite considerable number of young members – and further bribery may take the shape of small prizes.

We always have a wide variety of items on show and while the theme is generally science fictional, other items creep in and are equally welcome.

One or two Novaconees were tempted last year to bring art along for Novacon 41 and I have NAMES and have allocated space for these names already – you know who you are (no pressure!)

Let me know if you need anything specific to display your art with. Otherwise, you are welcome to delve into the Novacon Art Show box of bits to find what you need to stick or hang things. It also adds to the overall art appeal when we have sculptures or other 3D objects to put on show so please don’t feel limited in what you bring.

There will be late/early opening again Saturday evening and Sunday morning which proved popular last year with Dealers in particular. This is only possible with **Gopherage** and it’s FUN being an art show gopher (it is, trust me!). Gophers will be sought out, encouraged, cajoled and bribed and probably filled with chocolate and tempted with alcohol.

The boring information bits:

E-mail me (serena@ravensquill.org) if you haven’t already, to say you will be exhibiting.

Twitter (@pinkraven) or Facebook Messages (serena culfeather) are simple and effective but good old-fashioned telephonic communication works for me too – 01606 43957 or 0779 209 3534.

I shall be arriving on Thursday night and as soon as the art display equipment arrives, can have the boards and tables set up. If you are bringing art but are likely to arrive late (Sat. for example), please warn me.

See you all soon....

Going Nova

Steve Green

There's been a lot of discussion in recent years about the future of the Nova Awards, not least at the debate I chaired at Novacon 39 during what I thought would be my final weekend as administrator. Unfortunately, the planned consultation process never took place and my successor had to step down at the eleventh hour, so last year's ceremony defaulted to business as usual, including the continuing slump in voting figures.

All that changes this year. By the time you read this progress report, we'll have launched our new online ballot form – not only for Novacon members, but for any UK or Irish fan who's read at least six Nova-eligible fanzines. Given all but four of the twenty titles currently listed on the Novacon website are available to download or read online, joining the Nova Awards' traditional informed vote no longer represents the hurdle it did during the days when fanzines were only available as limited-run hardcopies distributed by hand or at the debatable mercy of the Royal Mail.

So now the ball is in your court. Personally, I believe the Nova Awards are an institution worth preserving, else I wouldn't have sacrificed my Sunday mornings for the past eight Novacons. If you feel the same way, ensure you post your online ballot before midnight on 7 November, or do it in person at Novacon 41. Better still, spread the word and encourage UK and Irish fans who aren't joining us in Nottingham to help boost the turnout. Alternatively, I guess I'll have to find something else to fill my Sunday morning next year.

Here is a selection of eligible fanzines, you can find the latest list and how to get copies at www.novacon.org.uk.

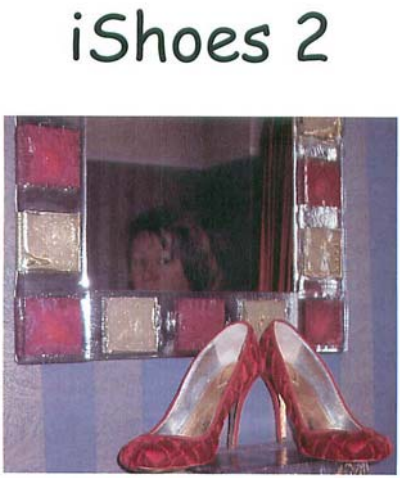
Andromeda's Offspring #1 Theresa Derwin; **An Fleghes Hager-Na Yu Canjeons** #3 & #4 Doug Bell; **Ansible** #279, #280, #281, #282, #283, #284, #285 Dave Langford; **Banana Wings** #44 - #46 Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer; **Brum Group News** #470, #472, #473, #474, #475], #476 , #477, #478, #479, #480, #481 Rog Peyton for the Birmingham Science Fiction Group;. **Bye Bye Johnny** #4 Graham Charnock; **Concatenation** Summer 2011 edition, Jonathan Cowie; **Data Dump** #157, #158 Steve Sneyd; **Exhibition Hall** #15, #16 Chris Garcia, Ariana Wolfe & James Bacon; **The Fortnightly Fix** #16, #17, #18, #19, #20, #21, #22 Steve Green; **Griff** #3 Ian Milstead;. **Head** #10 Doug Bell & Christina Lake; **iShoes** #4 Yvonne Rowse; **Journey Planet** #7, #8, #9 James Bacon, Claire Brialey & Chris Garcia (guest editors: Pete Young, #7; Yvonne Rowse, #9); **A Meara For Observers** #5, #6 Mike Meara; **Paranoid** #23 Ian Maule; **Pips** #4, #5 Jim Mowatt; **Quantum B*llocks** #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, Jinnie Cracknell; **Relapse** #19 Peter Weston **Septillion Year Spree** David Haddock.

Why I Love Fanzines

Yvonne Rowse

I owe a great debt to fanzines. They were my entry into fandom.

The existence of fandom dawned on me fairly late in life. If it hadn't been for the BSFA ad in the back of an old book and then the convention listings in their Matrix magazine I would never have been aware. I went to an Eastercon, joined the Brum Group, went to a Novacon, went to an Eastercon, all without embedding myself into wider fandom. The people I met then are still friends but you need a number of people to talk to at a convention or you are just a needy middle-aged woman clutching at your few friends, unable to let them out of your sight in case you are left sitting on your own all night. To some extent I have always assumed that Programme was provided to allow lonely people to sit on their own in a less obvious way, seeming to be taking an interest in 'Whither the Fanzine'.



All that changed when I published Barmaid. Instead of blending into the general background of people milling around at a convention I came into focus for the fannish fans. Even then there were not many people writing fanzines. Coming out as a fan writer was an entry into a cosy and wonderful world. I received a number of lovely LoCs. One from Joseph Nicholas was very warm and welcoming. One from Ian Sorensen, in what I later found to be a typical piece of mischief, suggested that to fit into fandom I must follow the standard memes, suggesting I should ingratiate myself in the wider community by bad mouthing Joseph Nicholas.

Most of us in fandom are readers. Some of us will have closer and more rewarding relationships with fictional characters than we have with many real life people. We have imaginary friends. Becoming a fan writer, sharing our (most acceptable) thoughts, opinions, and feelings, in writing can make us more real to people like ourselves. We emerge from the throng of spear-carriers to become central characters or, more realistically, supporting characters in other peoples' narratives. What fun it was to add fan writers to my cast of fictional friends, the people I felt closest to.

And how sad it is to see some of those friends fade away. This isn't necessarily

because they are dying or ageing to the extent that they can no longer contribute, although when that does happen it means that no new episodes of their life come my way. I have never met some of my imaginary friends in person; some had disappeared before I could meet them. John Berry's fanzines, reprinted by Ken Cheslin, populated my life with lively young people in Ireland playing Goodminton and generally having a fine old fannish time. Those people, James White and Bob Shaw for example, as depicted by John, are real and alive to me though the actual people are either dead or gone from active fandom and had outgrown the tales long before I met their avatars.

No, the real reason that friends fade away is because my life has moved on, and new fanzines are becoming rather rare. I spend far too much time reading work related writing and, thanks to Julian Headlong, a lot of my spare time is sucked up into the black hole of mediocrity and waste that is the internet.

My friends are fading into a background populated with pollution incidents and government stupidities. But this raises the question: if my life is now jam-packed with stuff why am I not writing about it in fanzines?

My non-work related writing, such as it is, tends to be hastily scribbled pieces on my blog. To some extent this serves one of the purposes of my fanzine; it acts as an external memory for me. It doesn't, however, address the other purpose of fanzines, to write a coherent zine, a complete object, an intentional work of art (at its best) for a specific audience. Blog writing, as I do it, works very much like a notebook. I've become lazy, using hyperlinks rather than exposition, becoming even more careless at editing because I can always go back and tweak. The few comments don't constitute a Loccol and I have no idea if anyone actually reads anything I've written. Whilst having some benefits (I really like links) blogs seem to me to be a poor substitute for fanzines.

iShoes 3

I thought when I finished my Masters I'd have more time to write fannishly. Then I thought when I'd settled into my new job. Then I thought when Sally's GCSEs were over. Then I thought when her BTEC was finished, now I'm thinking once she's ensconced in Salford University. In reality it probably won't be until (if) I retire that I'll have the time to return to fannish writing and regular reading. I'm just hoping that there'll be something to return to… Luckily many of my imaginary friends have become real friends. I meet them at conventions where I am no longer hiding behind my own fanzine.

Novacon 41 Members

as at 08/10/2011

A1	John Meaney
A2	Yvonne Meaney
A28	½r
A23	Michael Abbott
A6	Brian Aldiss
A86	Brian Ameringen
C88	Meriol Ameringen
A165	Chris Amies
A139	John Anderson
A140	Diane Anderson
A124	Margaret Austin
A3	Iain M Banks
A147	Geoff Banyard
A96	Barbara-Jane
A27	Chris Bell
A134	Doug Bell
A113	Alan Bellingham
A49	Austin Benson
A10	Tony Berry
A11	Helena Bowles
A168	Simon Bradshaw
A20	Claire Brialey
A69	Michelle Broadribb
A70	Tim Broadribb
A153	Christopher Brooks
A43	Pat Brown
A42	Vernon Brown
A114	Ian Brown
A116	E.D. Buckley
J53	Marianne Cain
C54	Jonathan Cain
A52	Steven Cain
A33	David Carlile
A175	George Clarke
A174	Kathleen Clarke
A30	Joyce Cluett
A29	David Cluett
A12	Cat Coast
A161	David Cochrane
A72	Del Cotter
A109	Dave Cox
A137	Richard Crawshaw
A59	Margaret Croad
A115	Helen Cross
A167	Serena Culfeather
A120	Nelson Cunnington
A111	Julia Daly
A18	Michael Davidson
A19	Christine Davidson
A98	Steve Davies
A102	Malcolm Davies
A122	Robert Day
A117	Simon Dearn
A99	Giulia DeCesare
A180	Theresa Derwin
A40	Vincent Docherty
A93	Paul Dormer
A125	Martin Easterbrook
A121	Cathryn Easthope
A57	Sue Edwards
A144	Janet Edwards
A143	John Edwards
A78	Gwen Funnell
A68	Ron Gemmell
A164	Marcus Gipps
A145	Angela Goodfellow
A56	Niall Gordon
A129	Steve Green
A100	Dave Hardy
A7	Harry Harrison
A15	Eve Harvey
A14	John Harvey
A89	Susie Haynes
A71	Julian Headlong
A84	Dave Hicks
C85	Penny Hicks
A155	Mark Hill
A127	Martin Hoare
A156	Michelle Hurst
A149	Ros Jackson
A148	Rob Jackson
A160	Janet Jenkins
A159	Andy Jenkins
A128	Al Johnston
A65	Sue Jones
A158	Kari

A44	Leigh Kennedy
A47	Tim Kirk
A135	Christina Lake
A126	Dave Lally
A138	Dave Langford
A8	Steve Lawson
A9	Alice Lawson
A132	Gavin Long
A133	Caroline Loveridge
A46	Peter Mabey
A5	Ian R MacLeod
A118	Tim Maguire
A119	Clarrie Maguire
A169	Siân Martin
A95	Rory McLean
A63	Pat Meara
A64	Michael Meara
A177	Elaine Mein
A170	Nick Mills
A34	Chris Morgan
A35	Pauline Morgan
A104	Tony Morton
A103	Carol Morton
A87	Caroline Mullan
A130	Chris Murphy
A157	Phil Nanson
A48	James Odell
A37	Omega
A179	Nigel Page
A146	Colum Paget
A60	Andrew Patton
A36	Harry Payne
J38	Hal Payne
C39	Jodie Payne
A62	Mali Perera
A176	Tony Perkins
A131	John Peters
A123	Rog Peyton
A106	Catherine Pickersgill
A105	Greg Pickersgill
A21	Mark Plummer
A45	Christopher Priest
A112	Colette Reap
A92	Thomas Recktenwald
A150	JFW Richards
A151	MJS Richards
A41	Roger Robinson
A4	Justina Robson
A74	Tony Rogers
A141	Steve Rogerson
A67	Ian Roll
A178	Marcus Rowland
A77	Sally Rowse
A76	Yvonne Rowse
A94	Geoff Ryman
A51	Alison Scott
A26	Jamie Scott
A107	Ina Shorrock
A108	Gavin Shorrock
A16	Harpal Singh
A154	Mark Slater
A172	Pete Smith
A173	Nick Smith
A55	Adrian Snowdon
A101	Kate Solomon
A75	Ian Sorensen
A110	Douglas Spencer
A13	Richard Standage
A17	Tim Stannard
A80	Chris Stocks
A171	June Strachan
A22	Neil Summerfield
A83	Calvin Ternent
A82	Linda Ternent
A81	George Ternent
A97	Markus Thierstein
A58	David Thomas
A91	Alison Tomkinson
A90	Neil Tomkinson
A66	Dave Tompkins
A25	Jim Walker
A79	Peter Wareham
A61	Gerry Webb
A142	Ian Whates
A152	Laura Wheatly
A73	Nik Whitehead
A136	Peter Wilkinson
A50	Caro Wilson
A24	Anne Wilson
A166	John Wilson
A162	Mike Wood
A163	Sarah Wood
A32	Alan Woodford
A31	Anne Woodford

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A bid for the 2014 Worldcon
www.londonin2014.org
14-18 August 2014
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